

Wet dressings for eczema

How wet dressings help eczema



- Wet dressings help to reduce itch by **cooling** the skin. The itch is worse when the skin is hot and inflamed
- Wet dressings help with the treatment of **infection**, as they help to clean the skin's surface
- Applying moisturiser under the wet dressings helps to **rehydrate** the skin
- Wet dressings **protect** the skin from scratching, and help the skin to heal
- Wet dressings help to develop a good **sleep** pattern for the child and their family

Getting started



You will need:

- Bowl
- Tepid water
- Bath oil
- Cortisone or anti-inflammatory cream (if prescribed)
- Moisturiser
- Elasticated tubular bandages
- Disposable towels

Setting up



- Wash your hands
- Measure the lengths of elasticated tubular bandages needed
- For arms: measure from top of the shoulder to tips of fingers and add approximately 8 cm. Four lengths are needed (two for each arm)
- For legs: measure from thigh to tips of toes and add approximately 8 cm. Four lengths are needed (two for each leg)
- For body: measure from top of neck to base of bottom. Cut out armholes. Two lengths are needed
- Fill bowl with tepid water
- Add one capful of bath oil and two arm lengths, two leg lengths and one body length of the elasticated tubular bandages to the bowl
- Spoon creams out onto a dry towel

Applying the creams



- Apply cortisone or anti-inflammatory creams, as prescribed, to all areas affected with eczema
- Apply moisturiser over the cortisone ointments and to the whole of the body and face

Applying the wet dressings



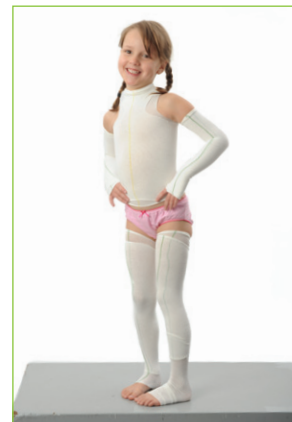
- Squeeze out the elasticated tubular bandages and apply to the body when warm and wet
- Apply the dry elasticated tubular bandages as a second layer
- Dry clothes can be worn over the top
- Alternatively for the trunk, apply a wet t-shirt or singlet. This can be repeated as often as needed and a dry t-shirt can be applied over the top

Cool compressing



- Cool compressing is a wet dressing for the face
- Wet disposable towels in a bowl of cool water and bath oil
- Hold the towels on to the face for 5–10 minutes
- Apply moisturiser immediately after compressing
- Cool compressing should be applied as often as needed until the itch is relieved
- Wet disposable towels can be applied to the neck as a scarf (only knot once), and as a wet bandana to the head
- The scarf and bandana should be applied only under supervision and not at bedtime

Important information about wet dressings



- Wet dressings are best applied at night, however they can be used during the day if the eczema is severe
- Wet dressings will dry after a few hours. Do not leave the dressings on dry (unless your child is sleeping) as dry dressings can irritate the skin by causing it to become hot, dry and itchy
- Elasticated tubular bandages can be washed in the washing machine in a delicates bag. You will need two sets of elasticated tubular bandages
- Do not wash or reuse disposable towels
- Do not use antiseptic bath oils in the wet dressings as these may irritate or burn your child's skin

When to use wet dressings

- Wet dressings play an important role in the treatment of eczema
- Wet dressings should be used when your child is hot and itchy and if they wake at night due to the itch
- Your child may also need a wet dressing if there is blood on the sheets or if the eczema is still present despite treatment with cortisone ointments, moisturisers and bath oils
- Early use of wet dressings will reduce the amount of cortisone creams needed to control the eczema
- Parents and children who have used wet dressings generally express great satisfaction with the technique and many have found them to be life changing

